

**WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes-July 14, 2004**  
**Tippecanoe County, Ross Hills Park-Ross House**

**Members present:**

Allen County-Ron James  
DNR-Steve Morris  
Huntington County-Mike Mettler  
Miami County-Ken Einselen  
Parke County-John Isaacs  
Sullivan County-John Gettinger  
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)  
Neiburger  
Tippecanoe County-Jim Andrew  
(alternate)  
Vigo County-Keith Ruble  
Wabash County-Ernie Passwater  
Warren County-Louise Jewell

**Voting members not present:**

Adams County  
Carroll County  
Cass County  
Fountain County  
Gibson County  
Jay County  
Knox County  
Vermillion County  
Wells County

**Proxies:**

Posey County-John Gettinger

**Non-voting members not present:**

INDOT  
DNR-DHPA  
IDEM  
Dept. of Commerce-Tourism

**Commission and DNR staff present:**

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director  
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation

**Others present:**

Susan Ulrich-NICHES and BOW  
Rae Schnapp-Wabash Riverkeeper  
Cecily Schneider-BOW  
Trent Sutton-Fisheries Professor at  
Purdue University  
Bernie Dahl-Banks of the Wabash  
Don Jewell  
Ruth Isaacs

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. All attendees introduced themselves. Steve Morris announced he had a proxy for John Gettinger from Tom Straw, Posey County.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2004 MEETING MINUTES**

Ron James made a motion to approve the minutes, and Lucky Neiburger seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as written.

The following items were added to the meeting agenda. John Gettinger proposed an item added to Old Business pertaining to the questions for the legislators. John also proposed discussion under New Business about trying to get a member of the Army Corps of Engineers on the commission board. Keith Ruble proposed an item under New Business pertaining to a resolution of support for a Terre Haute project being done by students of Rose Hulman Institute.

**SPEAKER** - Trent Sutton, Fisheries Professor at Purdue University  
Trent gave a presentation on a fish study taking place on the Wabash River. He spoke of the study he and his students have been doing on Shovelnose Sturgeon.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

See attached.

John Gettinger also reported that he and Susan met with Michael Laymen, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Outreach Coordinator at George Rogers Clark in Vincennes. A handout explaining how to get Corps assistance was passed out to the members of the commission. John feels that building a relationship with the ACOE's is very important to the commission. The four areas the Corps can provide funding for are: flood control, erosion control, ecosystem restoration and planning.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

See attached.

Susan Benner added the following information to her report. Susan has acquired scanned images from a book titled "Mosaic of the Wabash River". The images are aerial photographs of the Wabash River from Terre Haute to Logansport. The photos were taken in 1929. With Bernie Dahl's assistance Susan now has these images on CD's. If anybody would like a copy they should contact Susan.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Budget Report** – see attached.

Ron James passed out the budget report to members of the commission. Ron compared last year's budget with this year's budget. The "Need for Mission" is amounts thought to be needed for these categories without respect to funds currently available. Ron went through each expense.

On the brochure reprint category, the proposed budget for 2004-2005 is \$20,000. Lucky Neiburger suggested that DNR Historic Preservation & Archeology should be approached again to do the reprint.

Reimbursement of the Executive Director's travel was questioned to whether it was needed. The Executive Director is expected to pay their own travel as per contract. Steve Morris suggested budgeting these funds for commissioner's travel. That way there would be \$4,000 for in-state travel and \$2,000 for out-of-state travel.

Although it is not official yet, it appears that the mandatory reserve will be reduced by approximately \$28,000 this year. Steve Morris cautioned that this is not guaranteed yet.

There was discussion about how much money could be spent on the brochure reprinting and the water trail promotion. Keith Ruble made a motion that \$5,000 be spent for the

brochure and \$15,000 go to the water trail promotion. Louise Jewell seconded the motion. The motion at this time, was voted upon, and the ayes had it. Motion passed.

Lucky Neiburger made a motion to accept the budget as revised, Mike Mettler seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

### **Executive Director Search Committee Report**

The Executive Director position is going to be posted on the internet on [www.ejobs.org](http://www.ejobs.org). It costs \$1.50 a day to post the position, with a \$20.00 minimum purchase. It will cost \$21.00 to post the position for 14 days. Keith asked the commission for \$21.00 to post the position. Lucky made a motion to approve \$21.00 for posting of the Executive Director position. Louise Jewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Finance Report – See attached**

Steve handed out the financial report to commission members. Steve pointed out in the last column there is \$246.08 that has not been spent, this will revert back to the state general fund. Steve pointed out the \$48,795.20 is encumbered for the Executive Director contract. The balance of these encumbered funds will revert to the state general fund if the contract with Susan Benner is not fully executed. Steve reported pending expenses. \$58.31 would pay for the telephone bill. The office rent was \$150.00 for the months of April, May, and June. Susan Benner requested reimbursement of \$12.00 for postage. A box of brochures was also mailed to Evansville. Lucky Neiburger made a motion to accept the financial report. Ron James seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Legislative Report**

John Gettinger suggested having a representative from the Army Corps of Engineers on the commission board. John also asked that the commissioners should let their legislator know the importance of the WRHCC.

### **Water Trail Report**

Mike Mettler reported on the water trail. The water trail committee met last week. Susan Benner and John Gettinger met with Dave Longo of the Illinois DNR on May 19<sup>th</sup>. He was very receptive to the idea of installing signs on the bridges. A letter was sent to INDOT about the bridge signs and Susan has not received any reply at this date. The website and maps are going to be beyond the commission's internal resources. Keith Huffman had indicated to Susan Benner that Kehoe Park, in Bluffton is planning to develop a canoe launch at the park in the future. Susan Benner explained the bridge signs on the White River was a very expensive project. It cost \$20,000 to use the equipment to install signs. Susan is working with DNR to use remaining WRHC Fund monies for the development of the water trail. Jim Andrews suggested contacting Emergency Response to see if they could help. Bernie Dahl said suggested using stencils and spray paint for the signs.

Susan Benner estimated that approximately \$14,000 (approximately \$4,000 in grant money awarded to Banks of the Wabash and \$10,000 from remaining WRHCF monies)

was earmarked for the water trail. Those funds would be used for the development of a comprehensive web design, brochures and project signage.

#### **Wabash Video Report** – see attached

Susan Benner distributed WFYI partnership proposal to all of the commission members. Susan believes the proposal to be a sound one. There would be DVD and VHS distribution and unrestricted rights to the video. There was discussion about WFYI receiving funds from the commission. Steve suggested that all funds solicited be sent directly to WFYI, so the commission does not have to enter into an agreement with the station. Ron James made a motion to have Susan write a letter of understanding to WFYI stating that the commission would help with the video contingent on the grounds that no money would pass through the WRHCC. Mike Mettler seconded the motion. Lucky Neiburger requested that the motion be amended to request a response time as to whether they are willing to accept the commission's proposal. Motion was voted upon and passed as amended.

#### **Education Report**

##### **Teach the Wabash**

The June 1<sup>st</sup> "Teach the Wabash" in Peru was cancelled due to lack of interest. The August 3rd "Teach the Wabash" already has 34 people signed up. Tracy Newberry of Knox County Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting the event. The event will be held at Ouabache Trail Park's Nature Center in Vincennes.

##### **4-H**

Vigo, Sullivan, Putnam, Vermillion and Parke counties are planning a project.

#### **Newsletter**

Susan e-mailed everyone the electronic newsletter *Wabash Reflections*. The next newsletter will be distributed in September. The counties selected for submitting written articles for the September issue are: Wells, Wabash, Warren and Fountain. Bernie Dahl mentioned that the Banks of the Wabash could be possibly work with the WRHCC and combine their newsletters to help differ costs to both organizations.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **501(c)(3) Status**

Ron James had nothing at this time. Steve Morris informed the commission that DNR had hired a tax attorney who could possibly help look into this. Ron James suggested he would plan a meeting or a telephone discussion if Steve could get him a contact number for the tax attorney. Lucky Neiburger reported that the Wabash Parkway Commission had received a grant to form a 501(c)(3) and urged the WRHCC to move forward quickly with this.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Letters Sent & Received**

See attached

### **Other items**

Keith Ruble spoke of a project Rose Hulman Seniors have, called, Take Back the River. Keith would like to have a resolution of support drafted for this project. Keith noted that the commission might want to have the Rose Hulman Engineers do a project for them in the future. John Isaacs made a motion to endorse a resolution of support for the Rose-Hulman Seniors and their project, Take Back the River. Ron James seconded the motion. Ken Einselen wanted the resolution to have a provision stating that the endorsement pertains to those aspects of the project that are compatible with the commission's mission. Motion passed.

John Gettinger feels it would be in the commission's best interest to have a member of the Army Corps of Engineers attend our meetings. He would like a letter of invitation sent to one of the members. Lucky Neiburger feels the Army Corps would not attend unless told to do so by a legislator.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Ken Einselen said he needed help getting an alternate person from the county to replace Robert Althouse, after his death.

It was reported that the Vermillion County position also needs to be filled.

Keith Ruble thanked the Wabash Parkway Commission for the lunch.

Lucky Neiburger mentioned completion of the Ross House restoration was done through the WRHC Fund.

Lucky Neiburger reported on the Dragon boat races at the Riverfest. Lucky said Riverfest went well this year.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Bernie Dahl announced De-Trash the Wabash will be taking place on August 28<sup>th</sup> in Lafayette.

Bernie Dahl announced the next BOW meeting is being held September 15<sup>th</sup>, at Terre Haute at Fowler Park.

**Next WRHCC Meeting-September 8<sup>th</sup> at Merom Conference Center – Sullivan County**